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**DECISION**



**THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL  
OF THE UNITED STATES**  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20548

FILE: B-186252

DATE: October 20, 1976

MATTER OF: Noel J. Raufaste, Jr. - Long distance  
telephone calls

DIGEST: Employee of National Bureau of Standards  
claimed payment for long distance telephone  
calls from Philippine Islands to residence  
in Maryland. Employee stated calls were made  
to residence as agency office was closed due  
to time difference and information was relayed  
to office later. Payment may be made only if  
an agency official designated under 31 U.S.C.  
680a determines and certifies that calls were  
on public business and in interest of Government.

Ms. Emma Axline, an authorized certifying officer, National Bureau of Standards, Department of Commerce, by letter of March 30, 1976, has requested an advance decision regarding the propriety of certifying for payment the claim of Mr. Noel J. Raufaste, Jr. for long distance telephone calls from the Philippine Islands to his residence in Maryland while traveling on official business. Mr. Raufaste states that the telephone calls involved official business, i.e., the status of agency activities in the Philippines, and were made to his residence instead of his office because his office was closed due to the difference in time. The status reports were then communicated to his office.

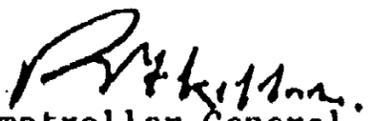
31 U.S.C. 680a (1970) requires that long distance telephone calls must be for the transaction of public business and that a head of an agency or his designee certify that such calls are in the interest of the Government before payment thereof is made from appropriated funds.

There is no evidence in the record before us to indicate that the certification required by the statute has been obtained. The travel voucher submitted by Mr. Raufaste on September 24, 1975, is the earlier Standard Form 1012 which does not contain a certification for long distance telephone calls. The reclaim travel voucher, which he submitted on March 15, 1976, is the revised SF 1012, August 1970, containing such a certification for approval by a designated officer, but it is not signed.

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Payment for the telephone calls may be made only if a properly designated official at the National Bureau of Standards determines that the calls were in fact made on public business as required by 31 U.S.C. 680a. If such an official certifies the calls, we would not object to payment. See A-13067 of this date.

Accordingly, the voucher may be certified for payment only if the certificate required by 31 U.S.C. 680a, supra, is obtained.

  
Deputy Comptroller General  
of the United States